

AccessLetter

**Cambridge Commission for
Persons with Disabilities**

"Transitions from School to Work" Event Slated

On October 8th, the Commission for Persons with Disabilities presents "Transitions from School to Work -- Exploring Paths from Dependency to Self-Reliance for Young Adults with Disabilities." Each year the Commission holds an event to mark October as Disability Employment Awareness Month, creating a valuable opportunity

for community participation, networking, and learning. People with disabilities, their friends, families, employers, educators, and people from a variety of other community organizations all come to enjoy a unique annual gala.

This year's panel and discussion will highlight the tasks and obstacles young adults with disabilities encounter on their journey from school to the world of work -- and will identify resources and programs available to help them move from dependency to self-reliance. The panelists include experts in the fields of education and employment for young people with disabilities, as well as young people who are themselves exploring this important life transition.

Panelist Careen Reinhold, a senior counselor at Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, emphasizes advanced planning: "I work with the Boston Public Schools quite a bit, in traditional and non-traditional high schools, doing transition planning. One of our biggest problems is that we often get students referred to us too late, at 17-18 year of age, as seniors. This is not the best way to

access the services you'll need, and can put students behind by a year."

Ms. Reinhold continued, "We prefer to meet kids in their sophomore or junior year at the latest -- so we can plan their academics as well as other services for a good transition. Taking a year off after high school because your plan is not

in place can lead to a loss of skills, and a big loss of self-confidence for a lot of kids -- sometimes it's hard to get back into the swing again. Just like other kids, as soon as you enter high school, you ought to start thinking about what you'll do when it's over, and seek guidance early to prepare well for your transition."

Another panelist, Kerlyne Pacombe, is Program Coordinator at the Mentor Match program at Partners for Youth with Disabilities, a nonprofit organization serving eastern Massachusetts. Now a professional social worker educated at Simmons School of Social Work in Boston, Ms. Pacombe is looking forward to sharing her own experience as a person with a disability making the transition from high school through higher education to a career.

Ms. Pacombe emphasizes the tremendous value and importance of mentorship in transitioning: "The disability community needs mentors who've been through the process, who know the ropes and can show younger people how to navigate and achieve."

("Transitions" Event continued page 2)



("Transitions" Event continued)

The panel and accompanying community discussion will be of particular interest to other young people with disabilities, their parents, educators, school guidance counselors, and special education teachers. The Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs and the Cambridge Employees Committee on Diversity are sponsors for this event.

"Transitions from School to Work" takes place on Wednesday, October 8, 2003, from 5:30 to 8:00 pm, in the ballroom of the beautiful Citywide Senior Center on Massachusetts Avenue in Central Square. The Senior Center is fully accessible to people with disabilities. Sign language interpretation will be available upon request, and assistive listening devices are also available on-site. There is always a delicious spread of finger sandwiches, fruit, cheese, treats and drinks for the enjoyment of everyone, as well as live music provided by the popular Tunefoolery Concert Ensembles. Those interested may call the Commission for Persons with Disabilities at 617-349-4692 (voice), or 617-492-0235 (TTY) for more information.

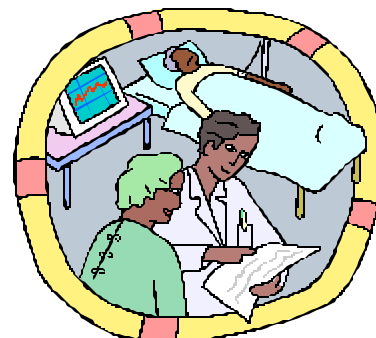
by Bet MacArthur

State Caps MassHealth, CommonHealth Coverage

October 15 is the DEADLINE for adults to enroll in MassHealth/CommonHealth, the Commonwealth's insurance plan for people with disabilities offered by the Division of Medical Assistance (DMA). Any new adult applications for MassHealth/CommonHealth must be submitted by October 14, 2003. Governor Romney's enrollment cap will then go into effect and a waiting list will be created. Applications for children with disabilities will continue to be accepted after this date. The forms may be downloaded from the DMA website <www.mass.gov/dma> or call DMA Customer Service at 800-841-2900 voice or 800-497-4648 TTY or contact the Common Health Employment Connection (CHEC) office at 1-866-698-6901 (voice) or 1-866-698-6900 (TTY).

On November 1, 2003 MassHealth/CommonHealth will begin charging members a monthly premium based upon family size, income, and whether the applicant has other health insurance. For more information, contact the DMA Customer Service at 800-841-2900 (voice) or 800-497-4648 (TTY) or call the CHEC office at 866-698-6901 (voice) or 866-698-6900 (TTY).

The new *Community Health Access* newsletter published by Community Partners, Inc. is a good way to stay informed about changes in the health plans available to Massachusetts



residents. Community Partners, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that coordinates two statewide initiatives that promote community-based outreach to expand health care access. Useful information about MassHealth Essential – a new health plan for former MassHealth/Basic members – and other important topics can be downloaded from their website at <www.compartners.org> or call 413-253-4283 or e-mail <access@compartners.org> if you would like to be added to the electronic distribution list for the newsletter.

by Linn Morrill

Access to the Voting Process

Elections are coming up soon and the Commission for Persons with Disabilities and the Election Commission want the citizens of Cambridge to know that we have worked hard to see that the voting process is fully accessible to people with disabilities and that all 33 polling sites are wheelchair accessible. Polling place notifications will be sent to all voters in mid-October. One polling site has changed since the last election, from the Police Station on Western Ave. to the community room at Putnam Gardens.

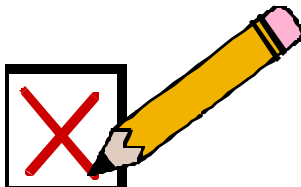
Please be sure to contact the Election Commission or the Commission for Persons with Disabilities if you have any questions about your assigned polling

location. REGISTER TO VOTE. Voter Registration forms are available in many languages. The deadline to register for the November 4 Municipal Election is Wednesday, October 15.

There are also several conditions under which citizens can vote absentee. For each calendar year they do this they are required to complete a new application for an Absentee Ballot. Having a physical disability that makes it very difficult for the individual to get out and about to vote in person may be one of the circumstances when voting absentee is a reasonable alternative.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has a special provision that makes it easier for individuals with permanent physical disabilities to apply for Absentee Ballots. Rather than having to contact the Election

Commission Office each year to get an application, these individuals can have an application mailed to them by the Election Commission. This is done by having their names placed on a special list of “permanently disabled voters” maintained by the Election Commission.



To be placed on this list the individual needs to file a certificate executed by a registered physician testifying to the person's disability status. In Cambridge

these forms are available from the Election Commission at 51 Inman Street. Call 617-349-4361 (voice) or 617-492-0235 (TTY) or e-mail <elections@cambridgema.gov> to have one sent to you. This should be done immediately to be in effect for the November 4 Municipal Election.

by Carolyn Thompson

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

- October 1 **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Drop-in Group** (information & support) on first Wednesday of each month, 6-8 p.m. New location is the 2nd floor library at the Brookline Public Health Center at 11 Pierce Street. For more information, visit web site <www.rsiaction.org>, email <cnot@rsiaction.org> or call 617-247-6827.
- October 1 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now**, a peer support group for women with physical or emotional disabilities and/or chronic conditions meets at The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 2-3:30 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month. Wheelchair accessible; contact Mary Quinn at 617-354-8807 or <woman@braintrust.org> for more information.
- October 2 **Mixed Abilities Movement & Dance Class for all ages**, weekly sessions on Thursdays, 5-6 p.m. at the Brookline Community Center for the Arts (BCCA), 14 Green Street in Coolidge Corner, Brookline. Weekly fee is \$11 when registering for 4-8 sessions; \$12 on a drop-in basis. People with and without disabilities will explore movement and play using travel, balance, counterbalance, weight-sharing and improvisation. For more information contact Erica Sigal at 617-254-4809 or <dances@world.std.com>; to register contact the BCCA at 617-738-2800, or <www.BCCAonline.com>. Classes continue Oct. 9, 16, 23, 30, and Nov. 6, 13, etc.
- October 5 **Kol Nidre service on Sunday interpreted in ASL**, 6:45 p.m. at Temple Israel, 477 Longwood Avenue, Boston. Free but space is limited so tickets are required. Contact Paula Ulitisky at <pulitisky@tisrael.org> or call 617-566-3960.
- October 6 **Yom Kippur service interpreted in ASL** at Temple Israel in Boston, 3:15-6 p.m. (See above listing for address and contact information.) **ASL service** also at Beth El Temple Center, Two Concord Avenue in Belmont, 9 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. For more information call 617-484-6668 or email Terry Snyder <SNYDERTPSA@aol.com> and type "High Holiday Services" as the topic. Tickets are required.
- October 7 **Basic Rights**, a workshop presented by Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) to assist parents in the planning, decision-making and monitoring of their child's IEP (Individual Education Plan). Covers state and federal special education laws. Presented Federation headquarters, 1135 Tremont St., Boston, 10 a.m. to noon. For more information or to register contact call 617-236-7210, 800-331-0688 or email the Federation at <fcsninfo@fcsn.org>.
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- October 8 Transitions from School to Work: Exploring Paths from Dependency to Self-Reliance for Young Adults with Disabilities**, 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Citywide Senior Center, 806 Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge. A panel discussion and opportunity for networking; see lead article on page one of this **AccessLetter**. RSVP by emailing <cthompson@cambridgema.gov> or call the Commission at 617-349-4692 voice, 617-497-0235 TTY.
- October 9 Healing and Art for Trauma Survivors**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street in Cambridge. This is a group for women that explores the use of art to heal past traumas. Free, no experience necessary. Meets 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month. For more information call the Center at 617-354-8807 or email: <info@cambridgewomenscenter.org.>
- October 10 K'sharim sponsored supper at 5 p.m. and Sukkot service, 6-7 p.m.** for teens and adults with disabilities and their families. K'sharim (Hebrew for "connections") is an innovative undertaking by Boston's Jewish community designed to involve people with disabilities in all facets of Jewish life. This evening's program is hosted by the Ohabei Shalom Community at 1187 Beacon Street in Brookline. Pre-registration (\$5 per person) is required by Oct. 8. For more information and to register, call Barbara at 781-862-0661.
- Oct. 11-13 Backpacking Trip in the White Mountains, NH for youth age 13-18.** Learn skills necessary to plan your own adventure including map reading, campsite selection and proper use of gear. Fee is \$225. For more information call 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY, email <info@outdoorex.org> or check the website at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>.
- October 12 Thoroughly Modern Millie (open-captioned and ASL-interpreted performance)** 7 p.m. at the Wang Theatre, 270 Tremont Street, Boston. Revisit the Manhattan of 1922 with this singing, dancing, romancing musical comedy from Broadway. Ticket Price is \$40.50. For more Information, call the Wang Theatre info line at 617-482-9393 Voice, 617-482-5757 TTY, or email <jbien@wangcenter.org> or check <info@wangcenter.com>
- October 14 A Juggling Act: Rebalancing Long-Term Care in Massachusetts**, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Hogan Campus Center, Holy Cross College in Worcester, MA. Conference seminars will focus on "Community Choices," the Olmstead Plan, "Senior Care Options," dollars-follow-the-person legislation, housing, the "Oregon Model," and other reorganization plans. Co-sponsored by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Mass. Council for Home Care Aide Services and Fallon Community Health Plan. Fee: \$50/person includes workshops and lunch; group rates available. Registration DEADLINE is Oct. 7. Mail check payable to Mass Home Care to Roseann Martoccia, Franklin County Home Care, 330 Montague City Rd, #1, Turners Falls, MA 01376.
- October 14 Basic Rights Workshop**, 6-8 p.m. in Hyde Park. (See Oct.7 listing for details, different time & location).
- October 14 Boston Voice Users** is a group for people who use speech recognition or dictation software. Meets 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at MIT in Building 2, Room 143. There is often a guest speaker. Go to their website at <<http://harvee.billerica.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/boston-voice-users>> and click on Boston-voice-users Archives to find out more about meetings and discussions.
- October 15 "Keep The Promise"- National Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Massachusetts (NAMI-MA) Legislative Reception**, 11am-1pm, Great Hall, State House. Join NAMI-MA's campaign to recognize the plight of 20,000 people on the Department of Mental Health's waiting list and talk with your legislators. For more information, contact Toby Fisher at 781-938-4048.
- October 15 Women Maximizing Abilities Now** - see Oct. 1 listing for details.
- October 16 Independent Living Centers and Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Advocacy Day**, 11am to 3pm at the State House, Grand Staircase. Tell our legislators to save CommonHealth by stopping asset tests and the cap on enrollments, and support funding of the Home Modification Bond Bill. Schedule meetings with your legislators before 11am or after 12pm. Materials for lobbying will be available. For more information, contact the SILC at 1-866-662-7452 (Voice/TTY).
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- October 16 **Joining Voices: 3rd Annual Parent Leaders Conference** (free) 9:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m., UCC Conference Center, Framingham. Sponsored by Mass. Family Voices at Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN) and Mass. Dept. of Public Health, and Mass. Families Organizing for Change. Share resources, exchange information, learn advocacy skills and get updates about parent/professional partnership activities. For more information, please call 1-800-331-0688, ext. 210, and leave a voice message, or email <massfv@rcsn.org>.
- October 16 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment. Note change in DATE to 3rd Thursday for this month.
- Oct. 17-19 **Women with Disabilities & Allies Forum: Linking Arms for Equality & Justice for All**, will address issues of mutual concern to the feminist and disability rights movements. This joint summit sponsored by American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and the National Organization for Women (NOW) Foundation will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Bethesda, MD. Early registration is \$225; some reduced fees are available. For more information visit the NOW website at <www.nowfoundation.org> or AAPD at <www.aapd-dc.org> or call 202-628-8669 and Voice/TTY: 1-800-840-8844.
- Oct. 17-19 **Backpacking Trip in the White Mountains, NH for adults age 18+.** Learn skills necessary to plan your own adventure including map reading, campsite selection and proper use of gear. Fee is \$225. For more information call 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY, email <info@outdoorex.org> or check the website at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>.
- October 18 **Ropes and Rocks teaches climbing skills to individuals age 18 and older.** Practice on climbing tower and work with other team members to navigate the ropes course. Equipment and adaptations make activities fully accessible. Takes place on the North Shore. Fee is \$75. For more information check the website at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>, call 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY or email info@outdoorex.org
- October 21 **Parent Consultant Training Program**, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and continuing for next five Tuesdays through Nov. 25 at the Federation for Children with Special Needs (FCSN), 1135 Tremont Street, Boston. The purpose of this six day training (plus a 50-hour internship) is to produce a skilled group of consultants who can represent parents of children with special needs and individuals with disabilities in matters relating to special education. Topics will include special education laws, negotiation, mediation, inclusion, transition, and communication skills. Completion of the Basic Rights Workshop is a prerequisite; class size is limited to 35. Fee is \$300 for tuition and materials; a small number of scholarships are available. For more information and/or an application, please call Phyllis Sneirson at 800-331-0688 or 617-236-7210 or e-mail <fcsninfo@fcsn.org>. [This training will be offered simultaneously in Worcester and Northampton.]
- October 21 **Disability Policy Consortium (DPC)** monthly meeting on 3rd Tuesday of month, 1-3 p.m. at the State House, Room A-1, in Boston. For more information contact Robert Sneirson, Chair, <rsneirson@aol.com> or Mary Lou Maloney at 617-216-5181.
- Oct. 22-23 **Community Access Monitor Training** in Medway, MA at St. Joseph's Parish Hall, 1145 Holliston Street. Learn how to help your community become more accessible by signing up for this workshop presented by the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD). Two-day program, 9 am – 4:30 pm, covers regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB), the ADA Standards for Accessible Design and hands-on practice taking measurements during site surveys. Fee is \$15 for consumers, \$75 for professionals; lunch included both days. Registration DEADLINE is two weeks prior to the event if you are requesting accommodations (large print, Braille, sign language interpreters), otherwise it is 1 week. For more information, contact MOD at 617-727-7440 voice/TTY or 800-322-2020 voice/TTY.
- October 22 **Access Advisory Committee to the MBTA** meets from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, Conference Room 2. Call 617-973-7507 voice or 617-973-7089 TTY for more information or to request interpreters. For problems with The RIDE service, call 617-222-5123 voice, or 617-222-5415 TTY.
- October 23 **The Olmstead Challenge: Medicaid's Community Living Options Progress Report** will be presented at the Tremont House Hotel, 275 Tremont St., Boston. Sponsored by the Disability Policy Consortium (DPC). The conference is free but registration is required. Contact Mary Lou Maloney at 617-216-5181 or email the DPC for more information and to register: <dpc_ma@yahoo.com>.
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- October 23 **LD/ADHD Consumer Group** for persons with Learning Disabilities/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is sponsored by Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and meets at MRC Somerville Area Office. The NEW LOCATION is One Davis Square in Somerville. Business meeting 10 am to 12 noon; Support Group 12 to 1 pm. For more information and directions contact Angelica Sawyer, 617-661-3117 (voice).
- October 23 **Healing and Art for Trauma Survivors**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. See listing on Oct. 9 for details.
- October 25 **Ropes and Rocks teaches climbing skills to youth age 13 to 18.** Practice on climbing tower and work with other team members to navigate the ropes course. Equipment and adaptations make activities fully accessible. Takes place on the North Shore. Fee is \$75. For more information check the website at <www.outdoorexplorations.org>, call 781-395-4999 voice, 781-395-4184 TTY or email <info@outdoorexpl.org>.
- October 26 **Writing to Heal**, 3 p.m. at the Center for New Words, 186 Hampshire Street in Cambridge. Join a poet, a playwright, and a memorist for a discussion of the role writing can play in the healing process. Sponsored by the Center for New Words and the Women's Center, 617-354-8807.
- October 30 **Sexuality and Disability Through the Life Span**, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. at Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center (JCC), 333 Nahanton Street in Newton. Sally Fogel, M.Ed., certified sexuality counselor, educator, trainer will discuss issues of 'normal' behavior vs. what might be disability- related behavior, public/private sexual behavior, legal issues of birth control and sterilization. Sponsored by the Special Needs Services Dept. of the JCCs of Greater Boston. Registration fee is \$10 for JCC members, \$15 for non-members. Contact Judy Pearl <jpearl@jccgb.org>, 617-558-6508 or Myra Korin <mkorin@jccgb.org>, 508-879-3300.
- November 4 **Eating Disorders in the Jewish Community – focusing on adolescents, young adults and families**, 6-10 p.m. at Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center (JCC), 333 Nahanton Street, Newton, MA. Sponsored by JCC in partnership with the Klarman Eating Disorders Center at McLean Hospital, the program will feature keynote speaker, Catherine Steiner-Adair, Ed.D. and panel discussion, networking and resource table. Registration is \$18/person, \$36/family is due by Oct. 21. For more information contact Judy Pearl at <jpearl@jccgb.org> or 617-558-6508.
- November 5 **Women Maximizing Abilities Now** – 2-3:30 p.m. See listing for Oct.1 for details
- November 5 **Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Drop-in Group**, 6-8 p.m. See listing for Oct. 1 for details.
- November 12 **Overcoming the Attitude Barrier: Helping Our Churches Welcome People with Disabilities**, 7-9pm at the Wellesley Hills Congregational Church, 207 Washington Street, Wellesley, MA. Clergy, lay leaders, religious educators, individuals with disabilities and their families are invited to a panel discussion by four people involved in disability ministry followed dessert and conversation. Network and learn about resources for your church. Sponsored by the Rhode Island and Massachusetts Council of Churches (MCC). To RSVP contact the MCC at 14 Beacon St., Rm. 416, Boston, MA 02108 or e-mail <council@masscouncilofchurches.org>
- November 13 **CCPD Monthly Meeting** – 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor Conference Room, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. with opportunity for Public Comment.
- November 14 **Caring for Our Mental Health**, with keynote speaker Kay Redfield Jamison, Ph.D., Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins U. School of Medicine and author of *An Unquiet Mind*, *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament*, and *Night Falls Fast*. This 8th Annual Conference on Women's Health and the Environment (free) is at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is a project of the Teresa and H. John Heinz III Foundation.



Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

The Commission was established in 1979 to act as a clearinghouse on disability and access issues throughout the City of Cambridge. We strive to raise awareness of disability matters, to eliminate discrimination, and to promote equal opportunity for people with all types of disabilities – physical, mental and sensory. The Commission provides information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to individuals and their families, employers, public agencies, businesses and private non-profit organizations. Examples of our ongoing work include:

- Work with various City departments to ensure **compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990** (ADA) and related state and federal disability rights laws;
- Provide free **disability awareness training** upon request for any Cambridge business or nonprofit entity;
- Issue **temporary disability parking permits** to Cambridge residents;
- Cosponsor the **taxi discount coupon program** with the Cambridge Council on Aging; and
- Facilitate additional **accessible parking spaces** through the Traffic, Parking, and Transportation Department.

The goal of our 11-member citizen advisory board, comprised primarily of individuals with disabilities, is to maximize access to all aspects of Cambridge community life. Our regularly scheduled Commission meetings, which always include an opportunity for public comment, are held at 5:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month.

Access Notice: The City of Cambridge and Commission for Persons with Disabilities do not discriminate on the basis of disability. This newsletter is available in e-mail, large print and other alternative formats upon request. To add your name to our mailing list, to inquire about alternative formats, or for information about other auxiliary aids and services or reasonable modifications in policies and procedures, contact CCPD.

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Access**Letter** is produced by the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities,
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51 Inman Street, second floor, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139

We welcome your articles, comments, criticisms, and suggestions. Write us!

Read past issues on our website: www.cambridgema.gov/~CCPD

If you would rather receive your copy of **ACCESSLetter** electronically, please provide us with your name and e-mail address. To request that your name be removed from our mailing list, contact us at 617-349-4692 Voice, 617-349-0235 TTY, 617-349-4766 Fax, or cthompson@cambridgema.gov

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